

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02

SS-15 ICA-11 TRSE-00 OMB-01 MCT-02 COME-00 HA-05

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R 181400Z JUL 78

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1780

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LILONGWE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 4066

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, PINS, PINT, SHUM, RH

SUBJECT: RHODESIA: WHO IS TO BLAME IN ELIM MASSACRE?

1. A JOURNALIST CONTACT OF THE EMBASSY, WHOM WE CONSIDER AN INFORMED OBSERVER AND WHO HAS OFFERED RELIABLE INFORMATION IN THE PAST, SPENT THE LAST TWO MONTHS IN RHODESIA, MUCH OF THE TIME WITH FRONT-LINE DEFENSE FORCE UNITS. HE HAPPENED TO BE WITH THE UNIT WHICH ARRIVED FIRST AT THE SCENE OF THE ELIM MISSION MASSACRE ON JUNE 23. HE SAW THE SCENE AS THE ATTACKERS HAD LEFT IT AND HAD A CHANCE TO TALK WITH SEVERAL OF THE STUDENTS. HIS CONCLUSION ABOUT THE IDENTITY OF THE PERPETRATORS MAY HAVE VALIDITY BUT IT IS BASED ON HIGHLY CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE..

2. IT IS OUR SOURCE'S CONTENTION THAT THE MASSACRE WAS CARRIED OUT EITHER BY NKOMO OR GOVERNMENT FORCES. HE PERSONALLY
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FEELS IT WAS GOVERNMENT FORCES BUT HAS NO WAY OF FACTUALLY SUBSTANTIATING THAT IMPRESSION. THE REASONS HE DISCOUNTS MUGABE FORCES AS THE LIKELY SUSPECTS ARE TWO-FOLD. FIRST, THE GUERRILLAS WERE OVERLY OBVIOUS IN THEIR IDENTIFICATION WITH MUGABE. IT WAS THE STUDENTS' AND HIS FEELING THAT THEY WERE TRYING TO SET-UP THE CONNECTION.

3. SECONDLY, AND MOST IMPORTANT, THE STUDENTS TOLD HIM THE GUERRILLAS SPOKE SHONA WITH A MANYIKA ACCENT. THE SOURCE, WHO IS QUITE KNOWLEDGEABLE ON ETHNIC DIVISIONS AND LOYALTIES IN RHODESIA, SAID THIS MEANT THAT THE PERPETRATORS OF THE INCIDENT WERE EITHER: LOYAL TO THE UANC, MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT FORCES, NKOMO MEN WHO WERE NOT NATIVE SHONA SPEAKERS OR WERE KALANGA (WHICH HAS A SIMILAR ACCENT TO MANYIKA), OR WERE UNALIGNED BANDITS. THE SOURCE SAID IT WAS UNLIKELY THEY WERE ZANU. MOST MANYIKA, WHO ARE POLITICALLY INVOLVED, HE SAID, ARE UANC ORIENTED. THE ONES WHO ARE ZANU ARE GENERALLY IN THE LESS POWERFUL REX NHONGO ZIPA COMMAND RATHER THAN TONGARARA'S KARANGA-DOMINATED ZANLA. (THIS ANALYSIS WAS INDEPENDENTLY SUPPORTED BY A SOUTH AFRICAN ACADEMIC DR. W. BREYTENBACH, WHO IS ACADEMIC EXPERT ON RHODESIAN ETHNIC DIVISIONS.) IT IS UNLIKELY IT COULD BE THE NHONGO ELEMENT, THE SOURCE SAID, BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT BEEN IN THE FOREFRONT OF OPERATIONS RECENTLY. HE ALSO DISMISSED THE BANDIT IDEA BECAUSE THE MASSACRE WAS OBVIOUSLY CARRIED OUT BY A METHODICAL AND WELL DISCIPLINED FORCE. WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE REPORTED MUTILATIONS AND RAPES, HE CONFIRMED THEY HAD OCCURRED BUT SAID IT WAS NOT THE WORK OF RAMPAGING, UNCONTROLLED MEN. THE VICTIMS WERE GATHERED IN ONE SPOT WITHOUT RESISTANCE, EXECUTED IN STRIKINGLY SIMILAR MANNERS AND THEN MOLESTED.

4. WITH ZANU ELIMINATED AND BANDITS UNLIKELY, THE SOURCE FELT IT COULD ONLY BE MANYIKA ELEMENTS OF THE INTERNAL FORCES OR
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NKOMO MEN PRETENDING TO BE MANYIKA IN ORDER TO FRAME MUGABE.
EDMONDSON

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